

Scabies Reporting and Control Guidelines

PROVIDED BY THE HENRICO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

2006/2007 Season

Detecting Scabies

Scabies is an infestation of the skin with the microscopic mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Scabies spreads rapidly under crowded conditions where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact. Mites burrowing under the skin can cause pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, especially the webbing between the fingers; the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee; the penis, the breast, or shoulder blades. Once away from the human body, mites do not survive more than 48-72 hours. When living on a human, the female mite can live up to one month. The elderly are more at risk for a more severe form of scabies called Norwegian Scabies.

An outbreak of scabies should be considered whenever three or more residents or staff members located in close proximity develop scabies within one week.

Reporting Scabies

Individual scabies infections are not reportable, but if an increase in scabies infections is observed and an outbreak is identified, contact the Henrico County Health Department Epidemiologist or Communicable Disease Nurse at 501-4522.

Controlling Scabies

In general, the following measures (The 4 C's) should be taken to control a scabies outbreak:

Care

- Scabies causing intense itching. There are several lotions available to treat scabies (See attached Treatment Options for Scabies). Be sure to apply lotion to a clean body from the neck down to the toes and leave on overnight (at least 8 hours). After 8 hours cream should be washed off and clean clothes should be put on. A second treatment may necessary if the client continues to have symptoms.

Cohort

- Reduce contact and activities among residents. Consider canceling group activities or screening for scabies before admitting residents to group exercises and activities.
- Staff members who have been providing care to residents with scabies should not care for other residents until after 24 hours after treatment.
- Residents who are infected should be isolated from other residents if possible.
- Staff members who are infested with scabies should be restricted from patient care until after they have received initial treatment and have been medically evaluated.

Clean

- All clothes, bedding and towels used by infested persons 4 days before treatment should be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. Clothes that cannot be laundered should be placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 7 days.

- Mites will be eliminated through routine cleaning of the resident's environment (bed linens and upholstered furniture, and vacuuming). Once away from the human body, mites do not survive more than 48-72 hours.

Curb

- Institute contact precautions. Staff should be reminded that scabies is spread primarily by direct prolonged skin-to-skin contact. Staff must wear gloves when providing patient care, wash their hands, and then change into fresh gloves before working with the next resident.
- Halt new admissions to the facility. When admissions resume, any new admissions should be screened for scabies and treated prophylactically until outbreak is over.
- Restrict visitation during the outbreak.